**Project Identification Form (PIF)**

**Project Type:**

**Type of Trust Fund:**

For more information about GEF, visit [TheGEF.org](http://www.thegef.org/gef/home)

**PART I: Project Information**

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| Project Title: | Establishing Albania’s Environmental Information Management and Monitoring System aligned with the global environmental reporting | | |
| Country(ies): | Albania | GEF Project ID:[[1]](#footnote-1) | 5638 |
| GEF Agency(ies): |  | GEF Agency Project ID: | 5308 |
| Other Executing Partner(s): | Ministry of Environment | Submission Date: | 2014-02-17 |
| GEF Focal Area (s): |  | Project Duration (Months) | 48 months |
| Name of parent program (if applicable):   * For SFM/REDD+ * For SGP * For PPP |  | Project Agency Fee ($): | 92,150 |

**A. indicative** [**Focal AREA STRATEGY Framework**](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/document/GEF5-Template%20Reference%20Guide%209-14-10rev11-18-2010.doc)**[[2]](#footnote-2):**

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| Focal Area Objectives | Trust Fund | IndicativeGrant Amount($) | Indicative Co-financing($) |
|  |  | 970,000 | 5,250,500 |
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| Total Project Cost |  | 970,000 | 5,250,500 | |

1. **indicative Project description summary**

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| Project Objective: Establishing Albania’s Environmental Information Management and Monitoring System aligned with the global environmental reporting | | | | | | |
| Project Component | Grant Type[[3]](#footnote-3) | Expected Outcomes | Expected Outputs | Trust Fund | IndicativeGrant Amount ($) | Indicative Cofinancing($) |
| Addressing the Institutional and IT solution for intergrated IMS |  | Harmonization and enhancement of the national environmental information portal using the existing Protected Area database to address global enviroonmetal conventions needs | 1.1: Assessment of needs and resources available to achieve more cost-effective and relevant data collection and maintenance by better identification of users and their information needs at the local and national level  1.2: Elaboration of environmental information management system with development of standards, meta databases to its effective implementation  1.3: Development of data and information centre |  | 425,000 | 2,300,500 |
| Update indicators, baseline data and targets |  | Key global caliber environmental indicators are set at national level and associated baseline information is recorded | 2.1: An effective set of environmental monitoring indicators is modified from existing ones or developed  2.2: Baseline information for environmental indicators is compiled |  | 220,000 | 1,190,000 |
| Capacity building for managing and using the IMS |  | Stakeholders capacity for information management (collection processing) and utilization (interpretation and reporting) for global environemental reporting needs is enhanced at national and local level | 3.1: Training curricula (data management and information management) and regular trianing modules developed and tested in collaboration with training institutions active in environment (University of Tirana, Regional Environment Center, Environment Center for Administration and Technology and other international training and academic entities. Training of Trainers sessions are conducted;  3.2: Provision of training in data and information management for Ministries staff responsible for monitoring and evaluation and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) representatives |  | 237,000 | 1,280,000 |
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| Subtotal | | |  |  | 882,000 | 4,770,500 |
| Project Management Cost (PMC)[[4]](#footnote-4) | | |  |  | 88,000 | 480,000 |
| Total Project Cost | | |  |  | 970,000 | 5,250,500 |

1. **Indicative** [**Co-financing**](http://gefweb.org/Documents/Council_Documents/GEF_C21/C.20.6.Rev.1.pdf) **for the project by source and by name if available, ($)**

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| **Sources of Cofinancing** | **Name of Cofinancier** | **Type of Cofinancing** | **Amount ($)** |
|  | Poverty and Environment Initiative |  | 200,000 |
|  | UNDP |  | 50,000 |
|  | Ministry of Environment |  | 50,000 |
|  | Ministry of Environment |  | 950,500 |
|  | Strengthening the national capacity in nature protection and development of Natura 2000 network |  | 4,000,000 |
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| **Total Cofinancing** |  |  | 5,250,500 |

1. **indicative trust fund Resources ($) Requested by Agency, Focal Area and Country1**

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| **GEF Agency** | **Type of Trust Fund** | **Focal Area** | **Country Name/Global** | **Grant Amount ($) (a)** | **Agency Fee ($) (b)2** | **Total ($) c=a+b** |
|  |  |  | Albania | 970,000 | 92,150 | 1,062,150 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | 0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | 0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | 0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | 0 |
| **Total Grant Resources** | | | | 970,000 | 92,150 | 1,062,150 |

1  In case of a single focal area, single country, single GEF Agency project, and single trust fund project, no need to provide information for   
 this table. PMC amount from Table B should be included proportionately to the focal area amount in this table.

2 Indicate fees related to this project.

1. **Project preparation grant (ppg)[[5]](#footnote-5)**

Please check on the appropriate box for PPG as needed for the project according to the GEF Project Grant:

Amount Agency Fee

Requested ($) for PPG ($)[[6]](#footnote-6)

* No PPG required. \_\_\_-- 0--\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_ --0--\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* (upto) $50k for projects up to & including $1 million \_\_\_30,000\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_2,850\_\_\_\_\_
* (upto)$100k for projects up to & including $3 million \_\_\_     \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_     \_\_\_\_\_
* (upto)$150k for projects up to & including $6 million \_\_\_     \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_     \_\_\_\_\_
* (upto)$200k for projects up to & including $10 million \_\_\_     \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_     \_\_\_\_\_
* (upto)$300k for projects above $10 million \_\_\_     \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_     \_\_\_\_\_

**PPG Amount requested by agency(ies), focal area(s) and country(ies) for MFA and/or MTF roject only**

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| **Trust Fund** | **GEF Agency** | **Focal Area** | **Country Name/**  **Global** | **(in $)** | | |
|  |  |  |  | **PPG** (a) | **Agency**  **Fee** (b) | **Total**  c = a + b |
|  |  |  | Albania | 30,000 | 2,850 | 32,850 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | 0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | 0 |
| **Total PPG Amount** | | | | **30,000** | **2,850** | **32,850** |

MFA: Multi-focal area projects; MTF: Multi-Trust Fund projects.

**part ii: project JustiFication[[7]](#footnote-7)**

1. **Project Overview**A.1. Project Description. Briefly describe the project, including ; 1) the global environmental problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed; 2) the baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects, 3) the proposed alternative scenario, with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project, 4) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline , the GEFTF, LDCF/SCCF and co-financing; 5) global environmental benefits (GEFTF, NPIF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF); 6) innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up

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| 1) The global environment problems, root causes and barriers to be addressed  Biodiversity  Albania has a total area of 28,750 km2, of which 24.4% is agricultural land, 36.6% forest and 14.8% pasture and meadow. The remaining 24.2% is classified as other, which includes urban areas, about 135,000 hectares of lakes and waterways and unused rocky and mountain land.  Albania is well known for its high diversity of ecosystems and habitats. Albania boasts a landscape of coastal plains and a largely forested mountainous interior, and is home to the deepest lake in the Balkans and to three, in total, transboundary water bodies (lakes). Within its territory there are maritime ecosystems, coastal zones, lakes, rivers, evergreen and broadleaf bushes, broadleaf forests, pine forests, alpine and sub-alpine pastures and meadows, and high mountain ecosystems. Albania is also well known for its rich and complex hydrographic network composed of rivers, lakes, wetlands, groundwater and seas. Wetlands coverage is 60.215 ha or 3% of the country and of this figure around 45.000 ha are designated Ramsar sites namely: Karavasta lagoon, Butrinti lake and Shkodra Lake. The forests cover or 36% of the country’s territory and the pastures about 15%. Approximately 60% of the pastures are alpine and sub-alpine pastures and meadows. The forests and the pastures have a diversity of types, formations, and plant and animal communities. The mountain alpine forest ecosystems are also rich in biodiversity. The higher areas are dominated by beech and pine forests and preserve a large number of endemic and sub-endemic plant species. A total of 27 plant species with 150 sub-species are endemic in Albania. To date 15.8% of the territory is declared protected but due to the lack of law enforcement, management capacities and financial sustainability protected areas are suffering lack of conservation and protections measures. Illegal logging and hunting and unauthorized construction in nature reserves remain significant concerns. An effective monitoring and information system has yet to be developed.  Land Degradation  Soil degradation and desertification is one of the main problems, in Albania as result of existing natural conditions and increasing demands from economic sectors. It affects almost all territory of Albania because of climatic conditions and topography. Soil erosion has been exacerbated by human activities, leading to one of the major and most widespread forms of land degradation. Major causes are deforest, overgrazing, cultivation of sloping soils, poor water and irrigation management and unsustainable agricultural practices. All these factors have leaded to the increase of soil erosion and decrease of soil fertility. In the past years, the increase of deforest has had a significant impact on soil erosion. Furthermore, the use of solid materials around the rivers from building industry has leaded to the increase of the soil erosion around these areas.  The data show that soil losses in Albania due to the erosion are very high and they vary from 20 to 30 t/ha/year, but in some areas this value reaches 150 ton/ha/year, when the acceptable value is only 1 t/ha/year. These values are also higher than soil losses values by erosion in Mediterranean area, which are up to 15 t/ha/year.  Climate Change  Albania is a non-Annex I Party to UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. The total GHG emissions of Albania were 7,834 kt of CO2 in 1990, 7,620 kt in 2000 and were projected to be between 11.000 and 12.000 kt in 2012. Currently Albania is a low emitter of greenhouse gases with 3.5 tons per capita but they are projected to increase in the coming years (mainly from transport followed by agriculture and waste sector). According to Albania National Comunications to UNFCCC projected climate changes in Albania include higher air temperature, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and a 20 % decrease in water runoff with a reduction of up to 60 % of power generation.  Albania has become a Party to Rio Conventions after 1990s, which corresponds to the country’s change of regime and participation in international agreements on environmental protection. The national development agenda of Albania fully takes into consideration the fact that its development will only proceed by adequately taking into account, global processes and trends. The principles of the conventions, as well as of the European Union environmental policy, have been established as priority areas in the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2007-2013, which is under review for the period up to 2020. The Environmental Cross-cutting Strategy integral part of the NSDI is the basic document that represents the national policy on environmental protection. This document addresses all environmental components and sets general guidance on problems arising from sectors having an impact in environment.  Reporting obligations under the existing environmental regulations have been restricted to compliance with environmental quality standards without including any information about policies’ effects and effectiveness. The lack of policy oriented monitoring and information support tools hinders intersectoral collaboration throughout the entire policy process.  In 2006, the National Capacity Self-assessment (NCSA) exercise was conducted funded by GEF and implemented by UNDP. The NCSA aimed at identifying capacity needs and priorities with respect to the global environment and within the context of sustainable development in order for Albania to meet the requirements and obligations of the Global Environmental Conventions in a coordinated and strategic manner.  The NCSA highlighted numerous existing problems in information collection and management systems, and the government's limited capacity to meet its obligations, which results in uninformed constituency, poor knowledge of existing problems and their extent by the decision makers, which in turn leads to poor planning practices. The immediate need for sound and integrated information was articulated in the NCSA as:  • Providing basis for the development of specific and yet future looking policies, strategies, plans, undertaking specific measures;  • Enabling the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and the general public in getting more aware and mobilized around solving particular issues and pressuring the government to adhere to its obligations;  • Reporting to the all three Rio Conventions to which Albania is the signatory and has commitments.  The main feature of the current environmental monitoring landscape in Albania is fragmentation, with a mosaic of governmental bodies and specialized institutions and agencies involved in the process, with the Ministry of Environment (ME) at the centre. The Ministry is the main beneficiary and custodian of the monitoring data collected. The Ministry is appointed as the responsible authority for environmental monitoring in the country, which through the Environment and Forestry Agency, (EFA) supervises the monitoring activities carried out by relevant institutions and agencies. There is currently no unit in the ME responsible for cooperating and communicating with other ministries, and moreover horizontal cooperation among ministries works only through mandatory regulations and ad hoc assigned units.  Over the past years the government has attempted several times to streamline its environmental monitoring and reporting system. In 2002, a Decision of the Council of Ministers outlined the list of environmental state indicators to be measured, as well as the institutions responsible to perform the duties set in the National Environmental Monitoring Program. In 2005, various biodiversity indicators were identified along with frequency of measurements and institutions engaged. However, the most frequent and productive exercise in terms of data generating has been carried out by public institutions engaged in research and monitoring. However, the data collection and use was often limited to their research programme design that did not necessarily meet the national level integrated information system needs. According to the provisions of the 2011 law 'On Environmental Protection', the Agency for Environment and Forestry is the competent authority for the management of the National Monitoring Network for Environment, which includes all institutions performing environment related monitoring tasks. Currently, the Agency has among its main tasks the collection, processing and dissemination of the information on monitoring data related to the environment. The challenge remains in the Agency role on coordinating the information flows from various institutions and using the information available for analysis of the driving force–pressure–state–impact–response chain providing relevant input to the policymaking process.  Creating a nation-wide environmental information system and development of national capacities to collect and analyze data and information against the metrics of global environmental indicators, will therefore enable Albania to monitor and coordinate sectoral policies strategically to fulfill national obligations under global environmental agreements so that Albania can meet the requirements of the Global Environmental Conventions in a coordinated and strategic manner.  2) The baseline scenario and any associate baseline projects  Environmental information generated by sectors goes directly to the specific ministry, i.e. health data to Ministry of Health and soil data to Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Ministry of Transport reports annually on urban waste for cities and the information provided is based on estimates. Environment-relevant data collected by line ministries (agriculture, transport, health, etc.) are provided to ME only upon request. No environment units exist in the sector ministries to ensure proper cooperation and coordination of the work and set up regular data flows to feed reporting or policy needs. At most there is a liaison person with environmental cooperation tasks in the sector ministries, but the position is rather low in the hierarchy and consequently the level of cooperation is limited.  According to article 8 (sections i and k) of the 2004 Law on Official Statistics, No. 9180, ME, through EFA, is the main source for environmental data. EFA reports data to INSTAT at various intervals depending on the contracts in place for data collection. But environmental statistics are still in their infancy in Albania, the current focus being on economic and social aspects. There is a mixed picture of the use of norms and standards for various thematic areas and parameters, ranging from EU or international ones (for air, biodiversity, water and wastewater) to national ones (for groundwater) or a lack of standards (for waste and soil).  Various projects and programmes carried out by several international and national agencies in the environment and natural resources management areas have generated a vast amount of data and information, which is important for conservation and sustainable management of natural resources within the country, as well as within the region. These data and information are stored in various government and non-government agencies, with no proper system established to interlink and retrieve for stakeholder utilization.  The UNECE second Environment Performance Review for Albania (2012) highlights, the favorable legal framework for the full establishment of an Integrated Environment Monitoring System (IEMS), several large projects have been dedicated to its design (European Union supported project ‘Strengthening of the Environmental Monitoring System in Albania’); and contribute to the expansion of data bases, establishment of nationwide monitoring stations, provision of equipment, etc (European Union supported project ‘Consolidation of the Environmental Monitoring System in Albania’ - CEMSA). Since the system designed under the former project was overly complex against the existing environmental status, the institutional framework for monitoring and economic constraints, during this period of re-aligning the system it is vital that the requirements Albania holds under the Rio conventions for information gathering and reporting be integrated to provide a comprehensive, cost-effective system which will serve long-term for the country in its capacities and commitments.  Within the IEMS system, there are well-established traditions on data gathering and analysis with various governmental institutions subordinate to ministries other than that of the environment and academia. These institutions and their technical capacities are part of the overall national framework and provide an important contribution to the baseline of the information and management system for the environment in Albania. These include: the Institute of Public Health (sea, coastal water, lagoons, and air), Geological Survey of Albania (groundwater, rivers), various faculties of the University of Agriculture, the Centre for Flora and Fauna Research and others. This variety of institutions and academia contributes to the combined capacities and ability to service an integrated monitoring system; however the overall system needs to be strengthened to ensure regular flow of information and maintain quality in data from the various teams conducting monitoring tasks to the coordinating authority the EFA.  Therefore, the project is a response to the need for an environmental monitoring system that is integrated throughout the related government institutions, that is well coordinated and cooperates, using international monitoring standards for the selection of monitoring indicators, the data collection processes, the processing and reporting of this information covering all three Rio Conventions. The GEF contribution will develop national capacities in Albania to align its national environmental information management and monitoring system with global environmental monitoring and reporting priorities including the compliance with the Multilateral Environment Agreements reporting obligations.  3) The proposed alternative scenario, with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the projects  The EIMS will make a valuable contribution to creating more reliable and consistent data for national and international reporting purposes, and better inform policy formulation and other decision-making processes. This includes using EIMS data to assess the cost-effectiveness of Environment Cross Cuting Startegy implementation, and identifying unanticipated impacts that may arise through policy interventions.  Development and integration of global environmental indicators within the concept of an EIMS will represent an important new set of capacities to measure and track the state of the environment from both a national sustainable development and global environmental obligation perspective.  In particular the project will aim to achieve:  I. Development of the EIMS to enable integration of global environment commitments into planing and monitoring processes.  Albania has established a national level environmental information portal in regard to the protected areas which functions well within its limited scope of data collection and information management. In order to develop a national information and monitoring system to cover all environmental issues relevant to the UN-FCCC, CBD and CCD using the framework database under EU supported CEMSA project. This output will first conduct a detailed assessment of the needs and resources available in the current institutional arrangement around the environmental issues. This assessment will be closely linked with the three projects under the conventions which will be underway in cooperation with UNDP (Albania Third National Communication to the UNFCCC), and World Bank (Update of the strategy and action plan to the CBD and 'Harmonization of the National Action Plan to CCD in Albania and preparation of the national report). Thus, the needs will be directly addressing those particular to the global commitments for information management and reporting. The assessment will be organised through a combination of research and analysis, interviews with major beneficiaries and a series of national and local workshops. As a result, a cost-effective and relevant data collection and maintenance scheme will be designed alligned to the information needs at the local and national levels. An effective EIMS will be developed taking into account the standards, norms, procedures and architectures to support the global conventions, as the specific threats and actions related to global environmental benefits. As part of the development of the system, national and regional meta databases will be established to support the system in providing a platform for data collection and maintenance which will later be used to analysis and reporting. Hardware and software will be selected in conformity with the design of the system (and with complementary data and information center at the AEF) to enable the maintenance of it in long-term on the technical side. Some support will also be provided for operational side of the centre.  II. Development and application of uniform indicators encompassing UNFCCC, CBD and CCD concerns and global environmental threats.  A structural review of existing databases will be enabled through identification of key sustainable development and global environmental indicators that would lead to development of a networked indicator-based EIMS.  Based on an assessment of the critical threats to the environment and global benefits under the three Rio Conventions, under this output there will be a detailed review and proposal of a set of monitoring indicators, which will also include some integrated indicators to establish a more effective, and easily maintainable system in the long-term. The choice of indicators will be made by involving a team of experts and governmental agency representatives tasked with the information and monitoring functions in Albania. A major task under this output will be alignment of the indicators to ensure that they complement the reporting process for the Rio Conventions and the national development agenda. After agreement on the selection of indicators, baseline information on the status of the environmental indicators upon EIMS launch are collected.  III. Stakeholder’s capacity for information management (collection processing) of key global environment data and utilization (interpretation and reporting) is enhanced at national and local level.  In order for the EIMS to be fully functioning, the individual capacities for data information management are to be raised considerably under this component. Based on the assessment of capacities and needs fully identified under component I, this component will design training curricula on data and information management. This component will be elaborated in full only after the EIMS system under component I has been elaborated, and the indicators under component II are selected. This is necessary to align the training curricula as closely as possible to the actual system and set of indicators. The training curricula will include modules on the application of the standard formats and methdologies selected for the EIMS. They will include data harmonization, data monitoring, metadata collection and analysis, quality control, data analysis, and alignment of that analysis for reporting and decision-making. Based on the curricula, regular training modules will be prepared which will apply, as much as possible, innovative approaches in training. The training modules will be tested in the framework of the project in order to make necessary improvements to the training curricula and match it to the needs at the systemic level.  Trainings will be prepared and tested in collaboration with training institutions active in the environment, such as the University of Tirana, Regional Environment Center -REC, Environment Center for Administration and Technology-ECAT, etc. A Training of Trainers will be included to secure a broad scope for the training within the project framework and beyond. The staff of line ministries and agencies involved in information management and monitoring will be provided with hands on training, as well as local authorities which are included in the EIMS, as well as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).  4) Incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline the GEFTF, LDCF/SCCF and co-financing  The proposed project is specifically structured to meet Capacity Development Objectives 4 and 5 of the GEF-5 Capacity Development Results Framework. It focuses on developing national capacities for informed decision making based on a functional environment information management system and implementation of the three Rio Conventions by developing global environmental management indicators as part of the Albania’s environmental governance regime. A set of complementary capacity building activities will aim at developing individual and institutional capacities to use global environmental management indicators as a monitoring tool to assess the intervention performance and institutional sustainability. Specifically the co-financing will be used to design and introduce the data flow system for institutions concerned with CBD, CCD, and FCCC issues ensuring that global environment indicators are systematically integrated and institutionalised within planing, monitoring and decisionmaking processes across all key stakeholder institutions.  The project is consistent with the programmatic objectives of the three GEF thematic focal areas of biodiversity, climate change and land degradation; the achievement and sustainability of which is dependent on the critical development of capacities (individual, organizational and society). Through the successful implementation of this project, a more integrated and cost-effective approach to developing and applying global environmental management indicators across the focal areas will be demonstrated.  5) Global Environment benefits (GEFTF, NPIF)  In the light of the above, the proposed project will enable Albania to fulfill national obligations under global environmental agreements in a coordinated and strategic manner. The well established data collection, management and monitoring system will strengthen the country's capacities to implement its obligations under the Conventions. This will improve reporting and the complementary actions and responses that can be implemented by Albania in line with the specific environmental threats which will be able to be flagged through the improved monitoring and selected indicators.  6) Innovativness, sustainability and potential for scaling up  In terms of innovation, sustainability and scaling up, the proposed project provides a pioneering initiative for streamlining efforts and resources, developing of capacities and reporting tools in the environment information management and monitoring patterns.  Introduction of the advanced web-based tools for environmental data and metadata analysis for environmental policy formulation with particular attention to measuring global environmental indicators is a novelty that this project will test and apply in Albania in the process of review of Environment Cross Cutting Strategy 2013-2020.  In order to ensure up scaling and sustainability the project will address the needs of key institutions in a demand driven and locally specific manner, building on existing initiatives to develop a harmonized database and EIMS capable of meeting commitments at the local, regional and international levels.  At the same time this initiative will build institutional capacities to operate and manage an indicator-based EIMS that will be responsible for further dissemination contributing to the development of informed and knowledge-based policy-making process in the country. |

A.2. Stakeholders. Identify key stakeholders (including civil society organizations, indigenous people, gender groups, and others as relevant) and describe how they will be engaged in project preparation:

The project will be carried out in a participative and systematic way, including a wide range of multi-stakeholder participants.The main agency and focal point for the proposed project, will be the Ministry of Environment, which is the main institution responsible for environment protection and monitoring in Albania. The Ministry also serves as the focal point for all three Rio conventions. Under the Ministry functions the Environment and Forestry Agency which is the body responsible for administering the Environment Information and management System.

Currently, the management of forests and fisheries are under the Ministry of Environment while the agriculture land management is tasked to the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration through the Department of Land Management; respectively, data and pertinent information is collected from the assigned department into these institutions. In this context the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration will be an important partner.

INSTAT as the government statistical agency collects information from institutions across the country, although in some cases the data may be incomplete, out of date or inconsistent. When preparing reports to international conventions, the ME requests official data from INSTAT. The draft NSDI 2013-2020 prioritizes improvement of multi-domain statistics environment, science and technology, information. This requires engagement of resources and improved inter-institutional contacts and professional capacity, in order to keep up with this challenge and ensure balanced development.

Other important stakeholders are regional institutions who play an important role in data gathering and the sharing of information through field extension offices. Scientific institutions associated with the Conventions include several scientific bodies (former institutes under the Academy of Sciences), such as: Institute of Biological Research, (former Hydrometerological Institute, now Institute of Geoscience, Energy, Water and Environment; Institute of Nuclear Physics, Museum of Natural Sciences, Botanical Garden, etc. Actually the above mentioned institutions are attached to the University of Tirana respectively to Faculty of Natural Sciences, Faculty of Civil Engineering and Ministry of Energy and Industry (i.e. Albanian Geological Service, National Agency of Natural Resources etc). Some other former research institutions such as Institute of Soil Studies is reshaped and split into Innovative technological and advisory centers in some districts, under the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural development and Water Administration; whereas the Institute of Forest and Pastures Research is also reshaped and split into forestry research attached to the Agency of Environment and Forestry under the ME, while the pasture research was embedded into innovation technological centers under the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Developmet and Water Administration. The majority of these institutions contribute to monitoring, based on government decisions and through financial support from the government. Ministry of Environment also sub-contracts these bodies to collect information and perform other Convention related tasks.

Civil society is also an important stakeholder to the extent that they are users of EMIS data and information. As of 2013 there are about 83 environmental NGOs in Albania. The NGOs are independent, have good expertise (although limited in number); yet they often have insufficient facilities and equipment. Their main areas of activity include environmental education and awareness raising.

The private sector is a key project stakeholder, in that they bear a role and responsibility to collect and report data on the level of their resource extraction and pollution.

A.3 Risk. Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design (table format acceptable):

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| Risk: Ensurance of long-term sustainability (financial, operational and technical) of the established information and monitoring system and centre. Risk rating: Moderate.  Mitigation measures: In depth assessment of needs and resources involving consultations among ministries, key institutions involved in information and data management to ensure the development of a streamlined monitoring system that meets the needs of the country to fulfill its commitments under the Rio Conventions. The development of the expanded system based on existing data collection system on protected areas will maximize the rational use of financial and technical resources. Selection of effective monitoring indicators to rationalise the application of monitoring system, and broad-based training conducted and institutionalised within the project will secure long-term maintenance of the system in correspondence with available resources and country's capacities.  Risk: Difficulties in technically establishment of IMS on the basis of the existing protected areas database. Risk rating: Moderate  Mitigation measures: Ensure the fusion of appropriate technical expertise in project implementation and through coordination with the experts under parallel initiatives to UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD conventions. The coordination mechanism among experts will be established at the PPG stage. Training curricula development and subsequent training includes both representatives at national and local levels, as well as environmental research and training institutions for quality assurance and to prepare a technically feasible, efficient and manageable IMS.  Note on Capacity Development Scorecard (GEF Tracking Tool): The methods set out in the Monitoring Guidelines of Capacity Development in GEF projects will be incorporated into the project framework. These methods include the use of a Capacity Development (CD) Scorecard, which was developed specifically for the Cross-Cutting Capacity Development (CCCD) projects and which build upon recent work on capacity and capacity development from the GEF, its Implementing Agencies, and from external research. The CD scorecard uses indicators and their corresponding ratings in order to quantify the qualitative process of capacity change and will be applied as a three-point (beginning, mid-point, and terminal) time series programme evaluation of how the project contributes to CD outcomes. Incorporating this CD framework into project design, implementation, and monitoring will provide a comprehensive monitoring framework aimed at assessing the range of needed capacities to achieve global environmental outcomes and ensure their sustainability, i.e., global environmental sustainability. |

A.4. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF financed and other initiatives:

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| This proposed project constitutes an important support to strengthen the environment criteria integration process in the public policies of all the economic activity sectors and will be implemented in close cooperation with relevant government institutions, actors and stakeholders. The project will develop, catalyze and link with other similar projects/programs including the joint UNEP/UNDP Poverty and Environemnt Initiative (PEI), which focus on developing an economic assessment comparing the long-term cost implications/savings/opportunities of the energy efficient and current energy inefficient built environment. This initiative will generate, access and use information and knowledge and strengthen capacities to develop policy and legislative frameworks of involved institutions. The findings will be part of the knowledge platform that will be established through the CCCD project.  Also, the CCCD project is very well-timed for providing strategic, targeted additional support on ensuring that global environmental concerns are addressed under the three UN environmental conventions through Albania's information management and monitoring system due to the number of initiatives through which various capacities and gaps under the Conventions are to be reviewed. The Third National Communication of Albania to UNFCCC is currently under implementation by UNDP, the revision of the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan under the World Bank, as well as harmonization of the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification in Albania. The CCCD project will interact with the project implementation units of these three convention-related projects, to integrate and address the challenges of information management which will emerge through the regular reporting processes. By establishing such synergy, the ouputs of the CCCD will be very closely alligned to the actual needs and challenges for information and monitoring of these three conventions and their specific national responsible parties.  The baseline also include a number of on-going and aligned initiatives that will inform and contribute to the CCCD project objectives:  Strengthening Effectiveness and improve coverage of marine and coastal protected areas in Albania, UNDP-GEF;  Strengthening the national capacity in the in nature protection and preparation for Natura 2000 network, European Union Delegation;  Also the project will establish close links with European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) that has been supporting Albania as a (cooperating country) for standardization of data reporting, procedures and capacity-building.  Institutional Support to the management of Protected Areas in Albania, IUCN;  Support Environmental Legislation and Enhancement in Albania, European Union Delegation;  MED Integration of Climatic Variability and Change into National Strategies to implement the ICZM Protocol in the Mediterranean, UNEP-GEF  Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem-Regional Component: Implementation of Agreed Actions for the Protection of the Environmental Resources of the Mediterranean Sea and Its Coastal Areas, UNEP with UNESCO, UNIDO, FAO, GWP-MED, WWF and others;  Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at Prespa, Ohrid and Skodra/Skadar Lakes, GIZ  Capacity Building for the Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework, UNEP  Consolidation of the environmental monitoring system in Albania, European Union Delegation;  Support for Environmental Civil Society Organisatons in Albania, REC |

1. **Description of the consistency of the project with**:

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| B.1 National strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions, if applicable, i.e. NAPAs, NAPs, NBSAPs, national communications, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, Biennial Update Reports, etc.:  Albania is a ratifying party to all three Rio Conventions, along with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was approved by the Albanian Government in January 1994. The Global Environment Facility, through the World Bank, has supported preparation of the Albanian Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP). The BSAP was approved by a decree of the government on October 2000, and included the creation of the National Council for Nature and Biodiversity (NCNB). Albania is now in the process of revising the NBSAP.  Albania has ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in September 2005. In the same year Albania has produced an interim report on the implementation of the protocol in the country. Through building capacity for the implementation of the National Biosafety Framework under the Global BS programme the government is completing the development, and preparing for implementation of the National Biosafety Framework in line with national priorities and obligations under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. As a result a biosafety policy will be in place together with the regulatory regime as and systems for monitoring and enforcement, as well as raising public awareness on biosafety.  Since January 1995, Albania has been a Party to the UNFCCC, having the status of a non-Annex 1 country. The Government of Albania has taken considerable steps for the implementation of the Convention such as preparing the National Communications and compiling a National Action Plan (NAP) to address Climate Change. The NAP aims at reducing GHG emissions growth rates. The abatement scenario foresees the introduction and implementation of different options mainly focused on energy saving and energy efficiency. The NAP also sets out measures to be applied in order to adapt to the expected Climate Changes. With UNDP support Albania has conducted The Technology Needs Assessment analyzing in details the technical potential and the economic feasibility of several technologies to mitigate and adapt to climate change; and a Carbon Policy Document is in place orientating the country towards ‘Clean Development Mechanism and other market instruments. UNDP has supported the First, Second and now the Third National Communication to UNFCCC which is in the under implementation.  Albania has acceded to the UNCCD on 27 April 2000. UNDP supported the preparation of the National Action Program to Protect Land and Combat Land Degradation. It is one of the major documents dealing with the land degradation in Albania. The main goals of this document are to assess the factors affecting land degradation and desertification and secondly to plan the activities for combating desertification and reduce the drought effects. The Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration, through its General Directorate for Forests and Pastures and its Department for Land Management also plays important role in fulfilling the UNCCD obligations. The ministry, with support from the World Bank, has prepared a Rural Development Strategy approved by a decision of council of ministers in 2007.  In April 2002, in line with the requirements of the Convention, Albania presented the first National Report to UNCCD. The report outlines the causes of desertification and proposes follow up measures to combat land degradation. The government has initiated the process of preparation of an Action Plan for implementing the UNCCD through a GEF supported project. |

B.2. GEF focal area and/or fund(s) strategies, eligibility criteria and priorities:

The project will contribute significantly to meeting the targets of the GEF Cross-Cutting Capacity Development Strategy Objective 2: Generating, Accessing and Using Information and Knowledge.

In particular the incremental financing of the GEF will help the Albanian Government to stock take the current environmental information management system (with special focus on indicators) and upgrade the existing Protected Areas (Biodiversity) Information System into more synergetic data management tool that would enable the country for informed decision making where the global environmental considerations are fully taken into account.

Albania is fully committed to meet its obligations under the MEAs and the proposed project is intended to facilitate an important step towards developing the capacities for an effective national environmental management framework. More specifically the project, directly or indirectly, addresses the following articles under the Conventions: UNFCCC (Articles 4, 5, 6); CBD (Articles 7, 12, 17, 18, 22, 26) and UNCCD (Articles 4, 5, 8, 16, 17, 19). The implementation of the CCCD project in parallel with the GEF projects for the update of the biodiversity strategy and action plan, the third national communication to the UNFCCC and the enabling activity under the UNCCC which includes the elaboration of a report to the convention, will facilitate the integration of these efforts in a combined impact which will contribute considerably in perfecting the integration of global environmental issues on the national level.

Through the improved use of information of knowledge, the project will increase the capacities of Albania to monitor threats to the environment across the conventions integrating socio-economic pressures, such as adaptation issues related coastal erosion, affects related to climate change, etc. More specifically some examples are:

- integration of biodiversity values into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes for improved reporting systems

- insufficient observational data for a drought warning system and a lack of proper selection of indicator data to monitor the vulnerabilities of areas to land degradation limit the country' capacities to support communities in resilience to drought and in establishing more sustainable land management practises where vulnerabilities are high

- current planning practises (along coastal areas in particular) need integration of climate change risk indicators on the national and local levels to improve planning of economic and recreational activities.

B.3 The GEF Agency’s comparative advantage for implementing this project:

The project fits with the comparative advantage matrix of GEF implementing agencies. The Government of Albania has requested UNDP assistance for the design and implementation of this project due to UNDP’s proven record region-wide and globally in developing the enabling environment cross sectoral coordination. The project deals with institutional coordination and capacity building, which are mainstream functions of UNDP. Moreover, UNDP has supported over 100 of NCSAs and related follow up projects across the globe and has generated a wealth of lessons and best practices with regards to cross cutting capacity development and integration of MEA commitments into national policy framework and MIS. UNDP country office in Albania has been managing a robust portfolio of environmental projects. It has maintained close cooperation with the environmental government and research institutions and is fully capable of implementing the proposed project.

This project will contribute very specifically to the implementation of the Government of Albania and United Nations Programme of Cooperation (2012-2016) whereby Outcome 2.2 is targeted to ensure that the National Government in Albania has legal and regulatory mechanisms ready for implementation and to ensure compliance with Multilateral Environment Agreements and the Rio principles.

UNDP will provide significant in-kind support to the project. Its technical and administrative staff will provide ongoing advice and logistical support to the project when needed. The UNDP Country Office will provide meeting facilities, communication facilities, transport facilities, as requested and as necessary. The project will be housed in the biodiversity and nature conservation unit and will share the costs admin-finance and public awareness raising costs with other projects in the unit. Since 1999 the unit, beside performing and accomplishing efficiently UNDP project Strategic Objectives, has proactively developed links, capacities and networking with experts and resources relevant to biodiversity conservation and management, allowing delivery of high quality, innovative services with a high added value. The unit is become a necessary ‘habitat’ to synergize expertise, activities and cooperation in the biodiversity, nature conservation and protected areas fields.

UNDP will further use its role as the UN Resident Coordinator to make sure the project is aligned with all UN system work. UNDP senior management will play a key role in advocacy, and in awareness raising by attending key public events. The UNDP Country Office will assign 5 staff members to be responsible for the overall management and supervision of the project. The project will fall under the overall supervision of the UNDP Country Director and the Programme Officer for Environment, who has a Masters degree in business administration (economics) and 10 years of experience in private institutions and international organisations in the environmental field out of which 6 with UNDP, with the direct support from a Programme Associate with a Masters degree in public administration and 10 years of experience in international project management. Implementation support will be provided by three staff members – Head of Finance Unit (MBA, 16 years of work experience in finance, out of which 12 with UNDP), Procurement Officer (bachelor's degree, 12 years of administrative and procurement experience with UNDP) and HR associate (bachelor's degree, 25 years of work experience in public administration, including 10 on HR). In addition, UNDP will provide cash co-financing in the amount of 50,000 USD over the course of the project for management costs.

Visibility of GEF financial support will be ensured by using the global GEF branding in all electronic and printed materials. UNDP will also apply the following UNDP-GEF policy: "The GEF logo should appear on all relevant project publications, including amongst others, project hardware and other purchases with GEF funds. Any citation in publications regarding projects funded by GEF should also acknowledge the GEF. Logos of the Implementing Agencies and the Executing Agency will also appear on publications. Where other agencies and project partners have provided support (through co-financing) their logos may also appear on project publications." Full compliance will be made with the GEF's Communication and Visibility Guidelines.

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**part iii: approval/endorsement by gef operational focal point(s) and GEF agency(ies)**

**A. Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (S) on Behalf of the Government(S):** (Please attach the [Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s)](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/OFP%20Endorsement%20Letter%20Template%2011-1-11_0.doc) with this template. For SGP, use this [OFP endorsement letter](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/OFP%20Endorsement%20Letter%20Template%20for%20SGP%2009-08-2010.doc)).

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| **Name** | **Position** | **Ministry** | **Date** *(MM/dd/yyyy)* |
| Pellumb Abeshi | GEF OFP | **Ministry of Environemnt** | **06/17/2013** |
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**B. GEF Agency(ies) Certification**

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| **This request has been prepared in accordance with GEF/LDCF/SCCF/NPIF policies and procedures and meets the GEF/LDCF/SCCF/NPIF criteria for project identification and preparation.** | | | | | |
| **Agency Coordinator, Agency name** | **Signature** | **Date** *(MM/dd/yyyy)* | **Project Contact Person** | **Telephone** | **Email Address** |
| Adriana Dinu  Executive Coordinator and Director a.i.,  UNDP-GEF |  | 02/17/2014 | Tom Twining-Ward,  Senior Technical Advisor UNDP (Green-LECRDs) | +421 903421114 | tom.twining-ward@undp.org |
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Annex

1. Project ID number will be assigned by GEFSEC. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Refer to the reference attached on the [Focal Area Results Framework and LDCF/SCCF Framework](http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/3624) when completing Table A. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. TA includes capacity building, and research and development. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. To be calculated as percent of subtotal. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. On an exceptional basis, PPG amount may differ upon detailed discussion and justification with the GEFSEC. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. PPG fee percentage follows the percentage of the GEF Project Grant amount requested. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Part II should not be longer than 5 pages. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)